

Message Text

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SUBJECT: STRUGGLE WITHIN THE SWEDISH COMMUNIST PARTY CONTINUES

REF: STOCKHOLM 5896

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. THE EFFORTS OF SWEDISH COMMUNIST PARTY CHAIRMAN (VPK) LARS WERNER TO ENFORCE ADHERENCE TO THE PARTY LINE HAVE RESULTED IN INCREASED CONFRONTATION WITH THE REBELLIOUS ORTHODOX FACTION IN NORTHERN SWEDEN. A SERIES OF INCIDENTS FOLLOWING WERNER'S "ULTIMATUM" (REFTEL) HAS LED SOME OBSERVERS TO CONCLUDE THAT THE VPK IS CLOSE TO DIVISION, SOMETHING WHICH VPK LEADERS FERVENTLY HOPE TO AVOID. END SUMMARY.

2. THOUGH INCIDENTS SYMPTOMATIC OF THE STRIFE BETWEEN THE MAJORITY OF THE VPK AND THE ORTHODOX PRO-SOVIET FACTION HAVE OCCURRED THROUGHOUT THE NORTH, MOST ATTENTION HAS FOCUSED ON THE NORBOTTEN DISTRICT, WHERE THE STALINIST OPPOSITION IS STRONGEST. FOLLOWING THE KIRUNA LOCAL GROUP'S EXCLUSION OF 20 WERNER LOYALISTS (REFTEL),
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CHAIRMAN OF THE STALINIST-DOMINATED NORBOTTEN DISTRICT

AND RIKSDAGSMAN ALF LOWENBERG, ONE OF THE OPPOSITION LEADERS, URGED THAT THE 20 BE RE-ADMITTED AND THAT AN ATTEMPT BE MADE TO "ACHIEVE NORMALIZATION". HOWEVER, THE KIRUNA LOYALISTS LATER ANNOUNCED THE FORMATION OF THEIR OWN GROUP, THE KIRUNA COMMUNIST WORKER'S COMMUNE, AND ABANDONED THE KIRUNA VPK LOCAL TO THE STALINISTS. NORRSKENSFLAMMEN, THE OPPOSITION ORGAN, CALLED THE LOYALISTS' MOVE "THE WORST TYPE OF OPPORTUNISM."

3. THE CONFRONTATION IN NORBOTTEN INCREASED IN INTENSITY WHEN THE NORBOTTEN DISTRICT ANNUAL CONFERENCE NOVEMBER 28 REJECTED A PROPOSAL FOR UNIFICATION OF THE PARTY, DESPITE THE PERSONAL ENDORSEMENT OF THE MEASURE BY WERNER. IN RESPONSE, WERNER'S ADHERENTS DECIDED TO COMPLETELY DISSOCIATE THEMSELVES FROM THE DISTRICT'S WORK AND WITHDREW THEIR NOMINEES FOR DISTRICT POSITIONS, LEAVING THE DISTRICT ORGANIZATION SOLELY IN STALINIST HANDS.

4. A SPOKESMAN FOR THE LOYALISTS LATER HINTED THAT SOME LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS MIGHT FIND IT NECESSARY TO WITHDRAW FROM THE DISTRICT AND WITHHOLD FINANCIAL SUPPORT. WERNER, WHILE EXPRESSING WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER A NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE QUESTION OF PARTY UNITY, EMPHASIZED THAT PARTY CONGRESS DECISIONS AND THE VPK PROGRAM "ARE NOT NEGOTIABLE."

5. IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE CONFERENCE, WERNER HAS ASKED THAT MEMBERS OF THE STALINIST FACTION DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT THEY WISH TO REMAIN IN THE PARTY, AND HAS HINTED AT THE EXPULSION OF THOSE WHO REFUSE TO DECLARE THEIR LOYALTY TO THE VPK EXECUTIVE. THE VPK LEADERSHIP WILL MEET DECEMBER 18 WITH ALL DISTRICT CHAIRMEN TO DECIDE ON A COURSE OF ACTION FOR DEALING WITH THE DISSIDENTS.

6. COMMENT: A SPLIT IN THE VPK HAS BEEN THREATENING FOR ALMOST TWO YEARS, AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS MUST BE VIEWED IN THAT PERSPECTIVE. DESPITE THE ASSERTIONS OF SOME OBSERVERS THAT THE WAR OF NERVES HAS LEFT THE VPK ON THE VERGE OF AN OPEN BREAK BETWEEN THE LEADERSHIP AND THE UNCLASSIFIED

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STALINISTS, THE FACT THAT A FORMAL DIVISION OF THE PARTY WOULD VIRTUALLY ASSURE ITS LOSS OF PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION IN THE NEXT ELECTION CONTINUES TO BE A COMPELING ARGUMENT FOR REMAINING WHOLE IN BODY IF NOT IN SPIRIT. WERNER AND MORE RESPONSIBLE LEADERS OF THE NORBOTTEN OPPOSITION WILL DO EVERYTHING THEY CAN TO PREVENT SUCH A SCHISM, WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THEIR RESPECTIVE IDEOLOGICAL IMPERATIVES.

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